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R.S.

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HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND LANDSCAPE
IN THE MAKING OF ETHNIC GROUPS:
the case of Friuli

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I - THEORY

1. Introduction

At least since Gumpłowicz, Central Europe has inspired much sociological thinking on nation and ethnicity (or "race", as he would call it); there is no need to recall the long list of modern-classic authorities in the field stemming from this part of the world. The reasons are all too clear and well known: it is here, in the "shatterbelt" between the East and the West, the "Rimland" and the "Heartland", the maritime and the terrestrial world empires, that the dynamics of geopolitical, racial, religious, cultural, and economic forces have produced, over many centuries, the most complex intertwining of those social groupings we refer to by "ethnicity" and "nation".

The literature accumulated over these issues is enormous, and no attempt will be made here to review it. Let us only state, at the outset, a few points, to stake out our conceptual field.

1) There is no generally accepted, unambiguous lexical system in these matters. Besides ethnic group and nation (and the rejected "race"), other terms are used in these contexts: nationality, culture, minority, linguistic group, etc. It can even be maintained that "society" and "civilization" belong to the same order of concepts. The problem is of course not merely terminological, but theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it has to do with the identification of the very core of social reality: what is a social group?; what is a culture? what is a society (societal system)? What is the difference between a society and a tribe or a State? These are all, as we know, basically unresolved issues. The labelling of a group as a nation, a nationality, an ethnic or linguistic or cultural group or minority is a social process, and has political-institutional and

therefore very practical consequences. Names are never innocent. Much of the dynamics of ethnic groups etc. revolves around the claims to "recognition" of the "appropriate" status, i. e. title or name.

2) The subjective-psychological dimension - the awareness, the will - is a constitutive element of ethnic groups and nations. Groups want and decide and claim to become such, through complex socio-cultural and political processes. Therefore, "objective" definitions and "scientific" descriptions, typologies etc. are inherently wanting. The scientist's analysis may clash with the group's (or its leaders') self-definition, and there is no a-priori reason to privilege the former. A positivist approach will not do, save insofar as also subjective dimensions can be objectively measured. Ethnic groups and nations are essentially symbolic systems, existing in the realm of the Spirit and of History, whose dynamics are "sui generis". In their study, more subjectivist sociological approaches (symbolic interactionism, labelling theory, structuration theory) seem more opportune.

3) As hinted above, ethnic-national phenomena have geopolitical, economic, and symbolic (psychological, historical, cultural, linguistic, religious etc.) dimensions. These are combined in different patterns and have different weights and roles in each specific case. The more abstract and general a theory of ethnic groups and nations is, the less specific and useful it is. However, it can be stated that three elements are basic in the definition of ethnic groups and nations: history, language and territory (landscape).

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History refers to the collective memory of the group, the complex of shared "foundation myths", the awareness of common origins (which translate then into common destiny). Record-keepers and historians are crucial carriers of ethnic and national conscience.

Language refers to the shared communication code and all the cultural symbolism by which it is imbued. Language is an immediate and powerful sign of group membership, a quasi-biological mechanism of identity and identification. Literati and poets, the professionals of the word, are therefore also crucial in the construction of ethnic-national conscience.

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Landscape or territory refers to the physical, spatial basis of the group. Man seems to be a territorial animal, tending to develop feelings of attachment and identification not only to other people, symbols etc, but also to place. Moreover, human activities tend to mould the territory into specific patterns and forms (landscape), and therefore to make it a carrier of the group culture, a visible manifestation of its values and ways of life.

These three elements seem to be basic and universal in all ethnic group and nations, although exceptions are possible. Other elements are also very common, like that part of culture we call

and localism-particularism into cosmopolitanism and universalism. In its more optimistic versions, these doctrine envisioned the "unification" of mankind into a single "world-society" "world-culture" and "world-state".

A first blow to the doctrine has been given, in the present century, by the "hardening" of nation-states, their growing penetration of civil societies, and their distrust or outright rejection of supra-national inetgration. Far from merging into one-another in the process of "ecological expansion", nation-states multiplied with the collapse of the Ottoman, the Hapsburg, and the overseas colonial empires of Western European powers. Where the State had no real "national" basis, it strived to build one ("nation-building"), usually after the classic French model. "Nationalism" was acknowledged, contrary to some of the main XIX doctrines (liberalism, marxism), as one of the most basic and persistent forces in society and history; along with religion and material interests, with with it had obvious relations. The science of sociology, which originally often shared the view of a steady progress toward the unification of mankind, adpated to the new situation, and became more or less consciously "national": "society" came to be equated, more or less explicitly, with the nation-state. But within this more limited context, the theory of growing hogeneization, unification and centralization, was still thought to hold. Local (municipal, parochial, provincial, tribal, ethnic, regional) variations in culture, mores, language, lifestyles, economies, were deemed to be inevitably effaced by the large-scale, national systems.

It has been one of the most remarkable surprises of the last generation that this has not happened, or not in the smooth way expected. Homogeneization and centralization seem to have triggered contrary reactions, local variations have persisted (though often in several new modes) and even re-invented, society has remained a system of different places and groups.

Among the most spectacular evidence was the growth of ethnic "pride" in the U.S., and the practical end of the "melting pot" ideology; America accepted to redefine itself as a mosaic of different peoples, who want to remain so - to some extent.

Some of such reactions have assumed the form of "ethnic-regional movements" (or national, or mini-national, or minority etc. movements: the terminology issue, as we have reminded at the outset, is very touchy and complex), common where the different group is strongly rooted in a specific region. To remain in North America, one has only to remind the challenge to Canadian unity by its French component in Quebec. In Europe it is the oldest "unitary" national states, like France, the United Kingdom, and Spain, that have been more affected: Brittany and "Occitanie", Scotland and Wales, Catalonia and Euzkady launched in the '60 strong drives for administrative autonomy, cultural self-development, and even political separation. A Federal state, like Germany, was virtually unaffected; in a formally Regional one, like Italy, the picture was mixed (more about this case later).

definition efface community ties. Therefore community is pursued at other levels; e.g., by the identification with a specific local and ethnic-regional entity.

4) **Modern functional-economic regionalism.** It has been pointed out that modern ethnic regionalism has often been triggered by functional-economic regionalism. By this we mean the tendency of modern states to intervene in the spatial distribution of social activities, in order to correct imbalances and injustice. One of the most remarkable features of modern states is the growing penetration of state into society, and especially the efforts of the state to redistribute wealth among groups, and to promote a balanced and just development. This also usually means "regional planning", because systems tend to polarize into growth centres and depressed peripheries. "Regionalism" has become, in this century, a political-economic doctrine stressing the existence of spatial variations in society and the need to control them - emphasizing the positive aspects (respect for local history, culture, identity, etc.; guarantee of pluralism and territorial division of power; etc) and countering the bad ones (regional inequality in wealth, power, etc). Often ethnic-regional feelings have sprung into existence, or received new impulse, by the awareness of such imbalances, highlighted by economists' and planners' reports. In other words, people in some regions have (re-)discovered their ethnic and national identity when they realized how much poorer and weaker they were, compared to other parts of the system. The popularity of economic and class-interpretations of regional imbalances ("internal colonialism" "center-periphery") "spatial classes" "exploitation of the marginal peripheries by the national centres" etc.) is a cue to the process by which economic claims are translated into ethnic-regional and national ones, or vice-versa.

3) Conditions of ethnic regionalism

In order to develop, ethnic and national claims must not only be fueled by general "causes", they must also find favorable "external conditions". In the following section, we shall outline some of them. The empirical frame of reference for such reflections are the ethnic-regional movements in the Western Europe of the last three decades.

1. Ethnic Heritage

The first condition is that there must be some factual, historical basis for ethnic claims. This is not difficult, since in pre-modern society every locality could develop its own peculiar set of mores, costumes, patron saints, festivities, fables, ways of speaking and behaving, to some degree different from those of the neighbouring community. This, of course, is due to the relative self-sufficiency and isolation of traditional rural communities. The range of variation can be very wide, due to historical sedimentations and convulsions; it can include strong differences in "race" (genetic endowment,

5. Favourable Political Circumstances

Every nation-state established itself by imposing one set of cultural traits, typical of the dominant group, at the expense of others, through the process called "national unification", or "nation building". This usually entails the neglect, more or less benign, or active suppression of cultural traits different from or incompatible with the "national" ones. But many modern nation-states also subscribe to political doctrines emphasizing individual liberty, democratic self-government etc.; and this opens the way for some degree of recognition, in some circumstances, of the "ethnic" traits. The balance between national unity and local-ethnic variations is very complex, subtle and shifting. The point here is that acceptance, protection and development of ethnic groups is correlated with the degree of general tolerance for cultural pluralism and local autonomy displayed by the national political system.

6. Favourable Socio-cultural Circumstances

As is well known, revolutions usually occur when things are getting better anyway. So also the upsurge of ethnic-regional claims is often not a reaction to growing "marginalisation", but a symptom of growing integration in the national socio-economic system. This can occur at the educational level, when a sizable layer of the population has gone through the national school system, and an educated local elite is formed. Many of its members will be wholly integrated in the national system; but some will not forget their ethnic roots, and will be in a position to use the cultural tools acquired through (national) education in order to further and vindicate the ethnic culture. This phenomenon is well known from the colonial experience, where the nation builders were formed in the educational system of the colonial power itself.

In the same way, intellectual leaders of ethnic-regional groups are often not only produced by the dominant culture, but are professionally active in its educational system, as teachers and professors.

But the formation of an intellectual elite not oblivious of its ethnic-regional roots is not enough. There must also be a wider stratum of sufficiently educated people, able to receive and understand the ethnic messages beckoned from the elite. Authentic ethnic culture is largely oral culture, by definition (since the presence of written literature signals the transition to "national" culture). It is also usually peasant, simple, traditional culture, in itself not easily usable to express the complexities of modern society. Among the first tasks of the E.R. elite is the diffusion of literacy in the ethnic language; which is quite new, and a wholly different psycho-social process than simply speaking. A second task is to enrich the language to modernize it. But all this presupposes familiarity with writing and reading. Therefore one of the conditions of modern E.R. movements is mass schooling.

It must be added, however, that the electronic media add a new twist in this pattern, since they can rely on, and relay, the ethnic language in oral form, with no need to go through the cumbersome literacy process. In other

II - A CASE STUDY FROM NORTHEASTERN ITALY: FRIULI

1 The Basis of Friulian Ethnic-regionalism: An Ethno-historical Sketch

1.1. The Formation of Ethnic-regional Identity

Friuli lies tucked at the northeastern corner of Italy, bordering with Austria and Yugoslavia; or better, to be true to a regional perspective, with Carinthia and Slovenia.

Its position, at the northernmost latitude of the Mediterranean basin and at the easiest point of entry from central and eastern Europe into Italy, determined much of its history. Friuli followed the fortunes of the large metropolises that successively flourished at the tip of the Adriatic "channel", to manage the trade between Central Europe and the sea: first; Aquileia, in Roman times; then Venice, in modern centuries; and presently

Trieste. In the East-West perspective, Friuli had been since antiquity a frontier, a battlefield, a stronghold and a first settlement for invaders and colonists. Probably only Sicily, in Italy, has been such a crossroads of races and cultures. (see fig. 1).

Historians of Friuli belong to two main schools. One emphasizes the "non-Italian" influences, in blood and culture: the Hillirians, the Celts, the Lombards, the Austrians. The other, on the contrary, extols the Venet, the Roman, the Frank, the Venetian, the Italian lineage. And indeed, during twenty-five centuries, these two sets of influences - plus innumerable ones of lesser importance, like the Byzantines, the French and the Slavs - left intricate traces on the people and the land. We shall not go into historical or ethnographical details here. Suffice it to remember that the name comes from the Roman town of Forum Juli (later called Civitas Austriae, now Cividale); that among the earliest expressions of ethnic-regional distinctiveness is considered the setting up, by the Lombards, of a short-lived but prestigious "Duchy of Friuli", in the VII-IX centuries; and that generally the Lombards are considered one of the most important components of Friuli's heritage.

The Golden Age of Friulian mythology is the X-XV period, when the German (Roman-Christian) emperors set up the area as feudal endowment to the Patriarch of Aquileia; whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction extended very far across the mountains, in what is modern Austria and Yugoslavia, and whose (smaller) temporal jurisdiction came to be called officially the "Patria (from Patriarch?) del Friuli".^(fig.2) In the early part of its history, the "Patria del Friuli" took advantage of the care the imperial power lavished on it because of its strategic importance as "gatekeeper" of Italy.. In the latter part, it was involved in the general (relative) prosperity of Italy's "Trecento". But it succumbed to the rising regional power of Venice, which annexed it around 1410.

In the following four centuries Friuli was ruled as a dominion: local institutions, the Patriarchate included, were maintained, but real power exercised by Venetian governors. Due to its outlying and peripheral position with respect to the Capital, only belatedly it attracted the interests of Venetian investors in agricultural development; for much of the period it was managed rather like a frontier, a military colony, important only as a battlefield and no man's land between Venice's and her eastern foes - Austria and the Turks. This neglect explains much of the traits of modern Friuli: its protracted rurality, its under-development, some archaisms.

4.2. The Emergence of the Linguistic Differentiation

A certain awareness of the difference between Friuli and other parts of the "terraferma" is clear in Venetian reports; especially in derogatory terms. As is usual in centre-periphery relations, Friulians were described as rather wild, miserable, and unruly fellows, with a broken way of speaking. In fact, the Friulian language displays traits very different from Venetian dialects; while it belongs clearly to the Neo-Latin family, it sounds closer to Provençal and Catalan than to Italian. It also bears some clear marks of a Celtic "substratum" and of Lombard influences. Unlike all Italian dialects, for instances, the plural is formed mostly with an -s; most words end in consonants.

Such peculiarities generally did not seem very important to Friulians. In writing, Latin and then "tuscan-venetian" ("Italian") was used as a rule. With exceptions, however. A certain number of literati, throughout these centuries, used Friulian in poems, giving rise to a sizable rivulet of Friulian literature, now several centuries old. Some of this was for a taste of "pictoresque", of populism; in some cases, for sake of vulgarity in the current meaning of the term (bawdy stories of clowns and rustics). In some other cases, however, Friulian literature was tinted with political satire of anti-Venetians, anti-Italian spirit. In these cases, it is a clue of self-conscious identity building and cultural distancing.

Of a Friulian "race" or "stock" there has been little talk and no serious studies, besides the usual XIX-century ethnographic impressionistic stereotyping. If it exists at all, it can only be a peculiar alloy of at least a dozen different breeds, including the three major ones in Europe - Latins, Germans, and Slavs, but with a sprinkle of such exoteric ones as the Hungarians. Indeed, most ethnic activists lately insist that the originality of Friulians lie just in their unique racial blending.

The originality of Friulian cultural expressions in higher and lower arts, in folk-ways and-lore and mores is difficult to assess, at least to the present writer. Local scholars of course tend to treat everything as unique, but this may be sometimes attributed to patriotism and lack of perspective, while outside scholars tend to treat it as a variation of the Venetian, or Alpine, culture.

left home to raise the children and tend the fields. It created the liquidity to buy out the land and build an own home, sacrosanct symbol of migratory and work success. It created familiarity between Friulians and many European lands and cultures, no more "alien" than the Italian interior.

The first great wave of Friulian migration ended with the World War I, to be resumed shortly after and drastically curtailed by Fascism. The second wave started immediately after the World War II, to reach its peak in the late sixties. Since the seventies the flow has ebbed and reversed. Permanent migrants are often organized in ethnic associations, or "Fogolars"; many of them cling quite strongly the ethnic traditions and identity (although it seems that the TV-generation will put an end to them), often in the more purist fashion. They have been instrumental in mobilizing many host countries to help the home-nationals in the recent case of the Friuli earthquake of 1976.

4.4 The Bulwark of Italian Civilization: Nationalist and Fascist Interpretations of Friuli

To go on with our review of Friulian history, from the point of view of the formation of ethnic identity, a few facts are still worth reminding. First the great war with Austria (1915-18), mostly fought in this region, resulted in an orgy on Italian patriotic propaganda. After the Caporetto breakout, large masses of the population fled in terror before the invading Austro-germans (a story memorably told by E. Hemingway in Farewell to the Arms).

The second fact is the peculiar Fascist policy towards Friuli. Staunchly centralistic as the regime was, opposing every trace of local self-government and abhorring any idea of protection of ethnic minorities, Fascism here supported the cultivation of Friulian literature, poetry, and songs, provided, of course, that it all remained at the folcloristic level. More important, it made sure that only the Neo-Latin strands of Friulian heritage be stressed. Roman She-Wolves and venetian Lions were enshrined wherever possible, and Friulians were exalted as the strongholds and sentinels of Latin civilization against German and Slavic "barbarism".

4.5. The Forced Marriage with Trieste

A third fact is the implication of Friuli in the Trieste tragedy, after the second world war.

Trieste was developed by the Hapsburgs as the empire's outlet to the sea. It never had anything to do with Friuli, except for a certain migration of manual workers from Friuli to Trieste, and a certain penetration of Triestino capital into the Friulian countryside, mainly for status and leisure (Trieste's commercial bourgeoisie acquiring estates and building villas). Trieste's immediate natural hinterland was not Friuli, but rather Histria;

central plains, most large feudal estates and communal lands were subdivided, by complex institutional and socio-economic processes, into smaller properties. In the lowlands, only recently reclaimed from the marshes, large capitalist farms with salaried workforces prevail. These ecological subdivisions correlate in many ways with variations in other fields. For instance, the communal tradition of the mountains is one of the reasons of a stronger-than-average support for socialist parties; in the lowlands, the Communists are strong; while in the median part, Christian Democrats command a large majority. Another correlation is with the type of economic development. When Friuli entered the modern economy - which happened only in the last fifty years - the Alpine economy collapsed, and the mountains were almost drained of population; while the newly reclaimed lowlands grew rapidly; not only in the primary sector, but also in an industrial sector marked by large investments by outside enterprises (shipyards, chemical works). The central part of Friuli was taken in the wave of industrialization only in the late fifties, as a backwash of the "Italian economic miracle"; and was part of that peculiar pattern of diffused, small scale, "backyard" industrialization now seen as characteristic of the "Third Italy" (after the Industrial triangle and the Mezzogiorno).

Presently Friuli employs only about 10% of the workforce in agriculture, while the rest divide themselves evenly between manufacturing and services.

And yet it remains in some ways rural, both because the modernization is very recent, and the memories of the peasant world are still much alive; and because people mostly continue to live scattered in the traditional small communities, commuting (usually short-range) to work. The majority of Friulians own their home and a plot of land beside; many are part-time farmers, or at least cultivate a vegetable garden. Friuli has been suburbanized, rather than urbanized. It has become reasonably prosperous but has not forgotten the mores of age-long poverty.

2.2. The Region at the Turning Point

Viewed from the air, little distinguishes it from neighbouring Veneto. Also if one looks at gross behaviors - work, leisure, institutional processes - this looks very much like any other part of Northeastern Italy. Structural statistics would not tell it is different. Even electoral behavior is quite homogeneous - in national elections - to that of the rest of the country.

And yet there is a widespread sense of distinction. The number of firms incorporating the root "Friul-" in their logo is enormous; one suspects that most of them do. Village festivals usually sport some feature drawn from Friulian folklore - choir songs, theatre pieces, groups, singers, dancers. Many of them make their advertisements in Friulian language. Most cars sport stickers referring to Friuli. If one enters a library, one will usually find a special display of literature in Friulian or on Friuli, with dozens, even hundreds of titles. Everywhere one hears, as a norm - even on the Radio and

aims at success at school and in the job. Italian (or rather, the Venetian dialect) has always been the language of the Friulian bourgeoisie; the abandonment of Friulian is but an aspect of the "enbourgeoisation" of the working classes.

And, of course, there is then the tremendous impact of mass, pop, electronic culture, in face of whose glitter and spice all expression of traditional culture look pale and dull. Friulian youth is no less dependent on the cosmopolitan (Californian) music and show industry than any other section of world youth.

This situation saddens most of the generations who still value the traditional culture, and it nigh terrifies the literati. As we have seen, through the century Friuli has accumulated a sizable literature. It has neourished a good number of associations and institutions for the promotion of Friulian language, culture, storiography. The most important of all is the Società Filologica, founded after W.W. I, protected by Fascism and now rather well funded by the Region, provided it sticks to scholarly studies and does not meddle in practical, political problems. The prospect of an eventual extinction of Friulian does not really move the pure scholars; but there is a wider Friulian "intelligentsia" - schoolteachers, priests, amateur poets and writers, and so on - for whom such question is existentially fundamental. Beginning with the mid-sixties, they have been mobilizing wider and wider support for a language policy designed to save the Friulian language.

In 1977, the regional government commissioned a specialized Institute (the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia) a study of all "minor languages" spoken in the area: Friulian, Venetian dialect, Slavic dialects spoken in the Eastern valleys of the province of Udine (not the standard Slovene spoken in the Gorizia and Trieste provinces, considered a "major" language) and German dialects in the tiny "ethnic-German" islands lacing the Northern border. In each linguistic area, a random sample of about 340 subjects (for a regional total of ca 1400) was chosen and administered a complex questionnaire. Among the themes of interests, the several linguistic codes use, the social situations in which they were used, the psychological attitudes and socio-cultural evaluations accompanying their use, and opinions on several issues of linguistic policy.

Seven years later (1985), the Provincial Government of Udine commissioned the same Institute another study, more focused both in its geographical extent and in its research objectives, and more varied in its methods. Three random samples were constructed: one of the general public (N = ca. 1500), one of schoolteachers (N = 316) and a third of local administrators. The questionnaires were tailored to each target, but they also had a common core, which was also comparable to the 1977 questionnaire.

It turned out that in the province of Udine, 75 % of the population regularly speaks Friulian, and another 10 % occasionally or seldom; almost everybody understands it.

Friulian is spoken more in the community than in the family: only 58 % of the families use Friulian exclusively; in another 9 %, also Italian is used.

3. Some Friulian Ethnic-Regional Complaints

3.1. The Problem of Planning for Development and the Problem of Migration

In the mid-60's, Friuli still had to fill a sizable gap in the race for economic development, in comparison to other Northern Italian regions. The first task of the newly instituted Regional Government of Friuli-Venezia Giulia was to draw up plans to spur and rationalize economic development. Consultants were hired from the Centre, as there were then no planning professionals here. What first came out were rather crude documents, high in utopian visions but low in knowledge of local realities. A first-draft regional plan provided for a concentration of resources in a ribbon of growth-poles, and the correlate neglect of the more peripheral parts of the region. In particular, the plight of the mountain area was stated as inevitable, and continuing emigration a "physiological" condition. This understandably raised hell in the concerned areas. The plan was denounced as technocratic, urban-centered, anti-rural and anti-Friulian.

Migration, until then usually considered a natural way of life for Friulians, if not one of the peculiar "glories" of this people, was redefined as the outcome of wrong policies, of sheepish submission, of capitalist exploitation, of "internal colonialism", of "Italian Imperialism". This reflected not only a changing attitude toward poverty and socio-economic realities, but also the spread of a new socio-economic culture, largely of a Marxist brand, among Friulian intelligentsia. The storms of '68 were gathering in Friuli too.

3.2. The Problem of "Military Servitudes"

Friuli has always been a frontier region, often a garrison community. In the context of the "advanced defense" policy of NATO, it became more than ever a military outpost. More than one third of the whole Italian army is stationed here, on the 2% of the national territory; to every 15 citizens there is a soldier. The military presence is very conspicuous in terms of barracks, installations and training grounds. This also means some competition with, and disturbances to, civilian activities and needs. Since the mid-sixties, this came to be known as the "problem of military servitudes". Technically, the term means that the development of settlements and infrastructures has to be channelled in ways as not to obstruct military needs (clearance areas, etc.). Politically and emotionally, they were understood as an oppressive burden the military imposed on Friulians. Military servitudes were indicated as the main, or one of the main, obstacles to socio-economic development of the region. They were also taken as the clearest example of general bureaucratic, centralistic, Roman grip on local affairs, the negation of regional autonomy. Around the military servitudes theme a large alliance of forces rallied together: one of the strongest denounces came from the Friulian clergy. But

3 5. The Problem of the Encroaching Southerners

Friuli is a land of emigration of manual workers, but also of immigration of service workers. Most Italian public bureaucracy is staffed, at all levels, by people from the South, for reasons that need not detain us here. So are also many other sectors - from the railroads to the schools and especially the armed forces. Some rapidly expanding industries also began in the 60' to attract manual workers from the South. The encroachment of southerners, in most public offices, and later, in the catering sector (Pizza!), began to be resented. Not least among the motivations of ethnic revival is also a re-affirmation of the distinction and, in perspective, the adoption of provisions to limit the invasion. Self government means, to many, first of all the right to be governed by one's co-ethnics. The issue is delicate, because it touches basic principles of the Italian constitution, and because it immediately arouses the imputation of racism. There have never been overt cases of intolerance against southerners in Friuli, but the resentment runs rather deep under the surface. Friulians are a distinctively Northern type of people - tallest, in the average, of all other Italian regionals; often fair-skinned and -headed, rather cool and reserved, soft-speakers, good drinkers, hard workers, home-loving, earnest, disciplined, law-abiding, moderate about sex. The difference with southerners is usually palpable, and the desire to stay different equally so.

4. "Friulanist" Forces

The established political parties and institutions were very slow in realizing the polarizing potential of Friulian complaints. For some years, they variously stigmatized Friulanist activists as reactionaries, subversive, anti-historical, romantic or fanatics. Such judgement reflected the different perspectives of the parties, but referred also to real differences in the Friulanist field, where one can distinguish at least three major components:

a) A traditional, clerical, populist one. This has the longest tradition and a wide popular basis. One of the basic documents of the Friulian revival is the 1967 "manifesto" of 526 priests, almost the totality, of the diocese of Udine. They were heirs of long-standing, if muted, Friulian Catholics' hostility to the annexation to the Italian "lay", liberal, "free-masonic", anti-clerical state; and, later, to the Fascist "pagan" and centralistic state. They were also steeped in the tradition of the Catholic socio-political doctrines, emphasizing local autonomy. The "Democrazia Cristiana" had been in 1945-48 the strongest, almost only, supporter of Friulian regional autonomy; and some of the most authoritative intellectual and cultural leaders of Friulanism have been priests, like G. Marchetti and F. Placereani. This component emphasizes the historical roots of Friuli in the Golden Age of the Patriarchate, the essentially Christian make-up of the Friulian ethos, and the value of small scale, rural, wholesome, communal living. Its adherents belong to the same social strata on which the Christian Democrat power is based.

with individual rights to be "assimilated" in the national, modern system. Then there are the problems of the large non-Friulian fraction of regional citizens, the hiring policies, etc. The technical complexities of the field are generally acknowledged, and it will probably take years to work out a generally acceptable legislative solution.

What is freely granted, of course, are funds for Friulian cultural activities - studies, museums, publications, choirs and ballets.

The agenda of the Friulanist movements of the 60' has become of common concern of all political forces of the region, although, of course, to different degrees, with different twists and with a different emotional commitment. Many of the then most burning problems have faded away, or become matters of routine administrative practice.

The most lively of them seems the environmental one. Although all parties pay lip service to the need for protection of the "ethnic territory", development policies pursued by the establishment often cause environmental transformations that raise strong opposition of Friulanist forces.

Thus, the battle for Friulian E.R. identity has been reduced to it two most elementary terms: the language and the landscape. They are both threatened by the processes of modernization, and it remains to be seen whether, and to what degree, and at what conditions, they will survive the impact of modernization. It is by no means certain that institutional and normative provisions can harness the forces of technology (of communication and of production, respectively) which are the ultimate causes of the crises of ethnic regions.

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